

Rev. Stewart M. Robinson, D.D.

STEWART MACMASTER ROBINSON was born in the Manse at Clinton, New York on July 21, 1893, the only son of W. Courtland Robinson and Frances Augusta Horner. His father and grandfather were both Presbyterian ministers.

He attended schools in Potsdam, New York; Syracuse, New York and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where his father had pastorates. Entering Princeton University in the fall of 1911, he completed the course in June, 1915 graduating summa cum laude. He was president of the Phi Beta Kappa group.

Planning to enter the Christian ministry Mr. Robinson went to Princeton Seminary. In the summer of 1916 he served a city mission in Columbus, Ohio, and preached one of his first sermons in the Broad Street Presbyterian Church of that city. The summer of 1917 was spent serving two churches, Plymouth Congregational and Park Central Presbyterian, in Syracuse, New York, preaching during July in one and during August in the other.

On September 4, 1917 Anne MacGregor Payne and Stewart MacMaster Robinson were married in the First Presbyterian Church of Rochester, the groom's father and grandfather participating in the ceremony. Mrs. Robinson is the daughter of John Nicholson Payne and Esther Brooks Payne and was born in Nashville, Tennessee. Graduating from high school at fifteen, she attended Ward-Belmont in Nashville, and graduated from the Rochester (N. Y.) Athenaeum and Mechanics Institute (now a part of Rochester University) in Home Economics. For four years she taught in the Girls' High School of Charleston, South Carolina where she also served as supervisor of Home Economics in the city school system. The following year she taught in St. Elizabeth's College (Convent Station, New Jersey). This was followed by two years on the staff of the Ohio State Journal (Columbus) where she edited the Homemaker's Page.

During the fall of 1917 while Mr. and Mrs. Robinson were in Princeton the call came for military service. The faculty of the Seminary accelerated the course and Mr. Robinson, after receiving his degree of B.D. from the Seminary and M.A. from the University, left the campus in March 1918 to enter training at the Chaplains' School at Camp Taylor, Louisville, Kentucky. He was commissioned on May 29th and went overseas immediately. Assigned to the 78th Division A.E.F. he was appointed senior chaplain on July 11th, ten days before his 25th birthday. He had been ordained in Philadelphia in his father's church in January, 1918.

After the first World War Mr. Robinson became assistant pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church of Cleveland, Ohio. The following year this congregation merged with the Euclid Avenue Presbyterian Church to form the Church of the Covenant. Mr. Robinson continued as assistant in the new organization until he accepted the call of the First Presbyterian Church of Lockport, New York, where he began his ministry July 1, 1921.

While in Lockport broadcasting was introduced. It was then in a very experimental stage. However, responses came from as far away as Prince Edward Island on the East Coast and Astoria, Oregon on the West Coast. Mr. Robinson spoke in various Canadian cities, several times before the York Bible Class of Toronto. This class was the personal effort of Mr. Denton Massey, and finally numbered several thousand.

The Robinson children number five. Stewart Payne was born in Cleveland, Anne MacGregor (now Mrs. William A. Eddy, Jr.), James Courtland and Alexander Proudfit were born in Lockport. Nancy Wiltsie was born in Elizabeth.

In June of 1929, six months after Mr. Robinson came to the Second Presbyterian Church of Elizabeth, Tusculum College invited him to make a commencement address and gave him the degree of Doctor of Divinity. During early years here Dr. Robinson invited various notable guests to Elizabeth, among whom were "Billy" Sunday, evangelist; G. Campbell Morgan, Bible expositor; Sir Charles Marston, archeologist, and others.

In 1934 he became editor of THE PRESBYTERIAN (founded 1831) following his father. In 1935 he was nominated for Moderator of the General Assembly meeting

at Cincinnati. In 1937 he was a representative of the denomination at the meeting of the Presbyterian Alliance at Montreal. All through the years between the wars Dr. Robinson maintained his interest in the chaplaincy. He was in the Reserve for more than a decade. Later he became a member and then Chairman of the denominational Committee on Army and Navy Chaplains. He is a member of the Executive Committee of the General Commission on Chaplains, with headquarters in Washington, and now serves as First Vice-Chairman. He advocated bills in Congress (since passed) establishing the Chiefs of chaplaincies in the two branches of the Service with General rank. He was one of the first to foster the idea of the acquisition of the beautiful building now the headquarters of the Commission in Washington and suggested its name: "Chaplains' Memorial." Last November the Secretary of Defense dedicated the building free of debt. While Chairman of the Presbyterian Chaplains' Committee Dr. Robinson personally guided the Presbyterian seminarians under the Navy V-12 program. He made trips to army camps, spent a week at Camp Butner as guest of the 78th Division (Second World War) and went to the West Coast recruiting chaplains until the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. had over 800 ministers in the Services.

In the summer of 1947 Dr. Robinson joined a group of a dozen American clergymen at the invitation of the Secretary of War to tour the Occupied Areas of Europe.

During the twenty years spent in Elizabeth over 1200 new members have united with the church. Dr. Robinson has maintained the custom of writing personal letters to all children baptized and all couples married, a group now numbering hundreds.

Family life at the Manse has been marked by several happy domestic experiences. Anne MacGregor Robinson (Bryn Mawr 1943) was married to Captain William A. Eddy, Jr., USMC (graduate of Princeton University) on June 15, 1946. Mr. Eddy is now completing his work at the General Seminary (Episcopal) in New York City. Stewart Payne Robinson (Princeton University 1941, Seminary 1944) married Ruth McClelland of Pittsburgh on December 27, 1947. Stewart was a Navy Chaplain for two years. Courtland, after serving in the Marine Corps, returned to Princeton University and is a senior. He has been accepted for medical training by the College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York. Alex is a sophomore at Hamden-Sydney College in Virginia and Nancy is at home completing her pre-collegiate work.

Dr. Robinson served as a member of the Restoration Fund Commission, is a trustee of the Stony Brook School, a Vice-President of the American Tract Society, an associate member of the Victoria Institute of London and Chairman of the World Dominion Movement, Inc. (American Branch). He was a member of the Board of Stewards of the Princeton University Rowing Association, continuing an interest he had in college when he won his varsity letter twice as a member of the crew.

Most of the summer holidays have been spent by the Robinson family at the doctor's mother's home in Delhi, New York. In 1925 and 1938 Dr. and Mrs. Robinson went abroad. Mrs. W. Courtland Robinson lives in the home to which she came as a baby in 1865. Little has changed about the place, and last summer Carol Garvin Eddy played in the house where her great-great-grandmother once lived.

The Robinson line has given 141 years to the ministry: James H. 59; W. Courtland 47; Stewart M. 30; and Stewart Payne 5 years.

Second Church life has from the beginning been marked by a strong evangelistic and missionary emphasis, and also by notably long pastorates. Dr. David Magie, the first pastor, served 45 years. Dr. Eben B. Cobb served as pastor 1886-1925 and as pastor emeritus, for 52 years. Dr. Robinson is now the pastor of third longest tenure. These three have ministered a total of 104 years which is all but 24 of the church's whole life.

Since Dr. Robinson began his pastorate the church paid off its debt on the Recreation Hall, redecorated the sanctuary and later the chapel, completed its quota to the Restoration Fund and is now seeking to secure funds to pay for the new heating system installed last summer. The Boards have risen to number twenty elders, twelve deacons and fifteen trustees. A total of over \$700,000 has been contributed by the people for all purposes.

The appreciation of the Committee is expressed to Mrs. Stewart M. Robinson and Mrs. Philip Schmitt for their assistance in making the foregoing biography possible.